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ABSTRACT

The major objectives of this study were to determine the reception of "In the News" by children within the target audience's ages, to determine if children within the target audience recognize the news program as a program, to determine if children learn from "In the News," and to compare children's learning from hard news (political, economic, or social) and soft news (nonpolitical or human interest). Children from second through sixth grade were randomly assigned to a control or an experimental group. The control group only answered a questionnaire, while the experimental group viewed two cartoons and two news segments before answering the questionnaire. Results indicated that older children learn from watching "In the News," that older children learn significantly more from hard news that from soft news, and that those young children whose favorite parts of local news programs are news (hard) scored highest on the "In the News" test. (JM)

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CHILDREN'S REACTIONS TO A CHILDREN'S NEWS PROGRAM: RECEPTION, RECOGNITION AND LEARNING

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of Problem

As parents, educators, and the general public have become more concerned with television as a factor affecting a child's development, television programming has come under much scrutiny. Research has dealt particularly with sex and violence in television programs and movies. Advertising directed toward children also has been the subject of much research.

In answer to much of the criticism of television programming, the Federal Communications Commission (1974) has established guidelines for broadcasters to follow in children's programming. The guidelines are as follows: 1) provide "reasonable amounts" of programming for children, with a significant per cent of "educational nature"; 2) meet special needs of preschool children; 3) air children's programs throughout the week; 4) avoid host selling and other techniques that confuse the distinction between programming and advertising; and 5) provide clear separation between programming and advertising.

Broadcasters have become so concerned over children's programming, and in most cases non-programming, that the three major television networks and the National Association

of Broadcasters code review board have adopted a new policy for evening television programming. The first hour of prime time and the hour preceding will be reserved for family viewing beginning Fall, 1975 (Broadcasting, 1975).

In a time of much controversy over children's programming, the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) News Division has begun an innovative program which may lead to the implementation of several of the FCC's guidelines for programming. This program is "In The News."

"In The News" is a one and one-half minute news program broadcast every 30 minutes between cartoons on Saturday and Sunday mornings. The program is designed to appeal to children ages seven to 13. The program presents current events news on such topics as worldwide politics, world economy, social issues, and human interest stories from all over the world.

The possibilities for "In The News" are numerous. This program could be aired daily during hours in which children usually view television or in the 7-9 p.m. family viewing period. Airing "In The News" daily would increase programming for children, and also be programming of an educational nature.

Before decisions such as these could be made, "In The News" should be carefully analyzed to determine if children

like and recognize the program, and if children learn from the program.

Review of Previous Research

A study by Shelby (1963) on the effect of a program that presented information on a variety of subjects in the context of entertainment showed that the program did not appeal to children, ages seven to 12, alike. This raises the question of the appeal of "In The News." Does the program appeal to all ages in the target audience, or only to a small segment?

Clyde (1964) analyzed the "attractiveness" and "communicativeness" of an information program in an entertainment context. "Attraction" of the program fluctuated as ages of the children varied. "Attraction" of the program varied significantly over a five-month period. Viewership was definitely related to the "communicativeness" of the program at the fourth, fifth, and sixth grade levels. Does "In The News" communicate better to some segments of the target audience, and if so, to which segments?

Kawashima (1971) found that children get ideas about occupations from the way that occupation is portrayed on television. Schramm, Lyle, and Parker (1961) suggest that most of a child's learning from television is "incidental learning" that occurs when the child views television for

entertainment purposes and absorbs certain informational items. This research does suggest that children learn from television. But do children learn from news-type material?

In research presented in Television and Growing Up: The Impact of Televised Violence (cited in Federal Communications Commission, 1974), the idea was discussed that kindergarten children distinguish commercials from programs on the basis that commercials are shorter than programs. Because of its format, "In The News" might be confused with commercials. Is "In The News" recognized as a program?

Perry (1959) and Burrows (1963) found that children prefer programs with violence, action, violent action, or comedy. Are "In The News" programs on violent or other "hard" news subjects more successful in conveying information than programs on non-violent or human interest subjects?

CBS Network Research (1974) has studied the format of "In The News" in relation to appeal and learning. The present format was compared with a half-hour version of "In The News." The study, using the Program Analyzer facility, was conducted in October 1974, in New York and Los Angeles among third and seventh grade students. The results indicate that viewers prefer the present one and one-half minute format. Students exposed to the half-hour program exhibited a slightly higher rate of learning. When the learning rates were projected against the estimated audience sizes, the

researchers estimated that a greater amount of total learning occurs among the audiences of the current format than could be expected to result from a half-hour "In The News" program.

"In The News" is not the only educational program now on the air. "Sesame Street" and "Electric Company" are two examples of successful educational programs for children. Ball and Bogatz (1970, 1973) reviewed Educational Testing Service data and found that young children who watch "Sesame Street" and "Electric Company" the most, tend to learn the most, especially greatly emphasized basic skills. The greatest viewing and learning occur among children whose mothers view the show and discuss the content with them.

Television as an educational tool has been studied extensively. Chu and Schramm (1967) studied more than 400 research studies comparing conventional and television teaching methods, and found that most studies showed no significant differences. In those studies that found one method more effective, television teaching had a slight edge. Chu and Schramm suggest that children, if motivated, can learn as much from televised lessons as face-to-face lessons.

In a study dealing with children's news program viewing, McLeod, Atkin and Chaffee (1972) found that 30 per cent of the sixth grade students "often" viewed national news

programs. Boys viewed more news programs than girls. How is "In The News" received; do boys watch the programs more than girls?

Atkin and Gantz (1974) studied children's exposure to national, local, and Saturday morning news programs in inner-city, suburban, and rural settings. The results were: 1) news viewing begins early in life and increases with age; 2) boys watch more news programs than girls; 3) race, academic ability, and political interest make only a slight difference; 4) children do not tend to imitate their parents news viewing behavior; and 5) opportunity is a major factor in producing news viewing. Moderate correlations between frequency of viewing and knowledge of political and current events were obtained. The present research deals with children grades two through six rather than the kindergarten through fifth grade sample used by Atkin and Gantz. Will their results be substantiated by this research project?

Research Objectives of Experiment

The major objectives of the present study are: 1) to determine the reception of "In The News" by children within the target audience's ages; 2) to determine if children within the target audience recognize the news program as a program; 3) to determine if children learn from "In The News"; and 4) to compare children's learning from "hard" and "soft"

news, where "hard" news is defined as news of a political, economic or social nature, and "soft" news is defined as news of a non-political or human interest nature.

Two hypotheses will be tested. The hypotheses, both based on research previously discussed, are: 1) Older and younger children exposed to "In The News" will learn news of current events; and 2) Older and younger children will learn more from a "hard" type of news than from a "soft" type of news.

Secondary objectives of the present study are: 1) to record children's recall of and reactions to cartoons and commercials in addition to "In The News"; and 2) to record children's sources of public affairs news.

The dependent variables of this study are recall, recognition, and learning. In an experimental setting, the independent variable, viewing "In The News," was controlled.

CHAPTER II

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Selection of Sample

Students from St. Christopher's School, Lubbock, Texas, an open concept private elementary school, were asked to participate in the study. St. Christopher's School has 23 religious beliefs and non-beliefs represented. Minority groups and foreign nationalities are represented also. Children come from varied economic backgrounds.

A letter explaining the study, a letter of endorsement from the school's director, Mrs. Betty Snyder, and a permission slip were mailed to the parents of 93 second through sixth grade students (Appendix A). Permission slips were returned to home base teachers by 83 per cent of the students.

Children who were allowed to participate were assigned randomly by school level to either the control or experimental group. In each group children were subdivided into young (second and third grade) and older (fourth, fifth, and sixth grade) groups. Parents were asked to not discuss the study with their children so as not to contaminate the sample.

Preparation of Stimulus Material

Stimulus material consisted of two cartoons, six commercials, and two "In The News" programs. All were recorded on a video cassette.

The "In The News" programs and two commercials were supplied by CBS-TV News Division. Ms. Judy Reemtsma, executive producer of "In The News," supplied a video tape of six "In The News" segments requested by the experimenter. The request was made after studying program titles for the past six months and after consulting with the St. Christopher's School director. Of the six segments requested, three were of a human interest nature and three were of a "hard" news nature. After screening the segments, two segments, one in each category, were selected for use in the experiment.

The human interest segment selected is titled "Bankrupt Ballet" and tells the story of the San Francisco Ballet Company's money problems. This segment was chosen over segments concerning bicycles and songs about cities because the material presented in the ballet story had definite points about which questions could be written. The young viewers (experimental group) and non-viewers (control group), grades two and three, were asked two questions about the ballet story. The fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students, older viewers (experimental group) and non-viewers (control group), were

asked three questions about the ballet story (Appendices B, C, D and E).

The "hard" news segment, "British Elections" was selected over segments concerning the Arab summit and Portuguese politics. "British Elections" was chosen because the subject matter had specific points which could be used as questions. "British Elections" told of the election of Harold Wilson as Prime Minister and also told of the political and economic state of Great Britain. Young viewers and non-viewers were asked two questions about "British Elections"; older viewers and non-viewers, four (Appendices B, C, D and E).

The two commercials supplied by CBS were Kellogg's cereal commercials which usually are aired between the introduction of "In The News" and the main story. The commercials were broadcast in this manner in the experiment.

The two cartoons in the experiment were "Bullwinkle" and "Under Dog." The cartoons were supplied by KLBK-TV, Channel 13, Lubbock, Texas, a CBS network affiliate. Both cartoons were animated.

The other commercials used in the experiment were: a toy commercial for Remco toys; a toy commercial for Jet Power; a cereal commercial for Quaker; and a snack food commercial for Hostess. All of the commercials advertised

products of general interest to children. The commercials were ones not currently being seen on television.

The video cassette was recorded in the studio of KTXT-TV, Channel 5, Lubbock, Texas, under the direction of John Lacy, program director.

A pretest of the questionnaire showed the necessity of making the questionnaire shorter and simplifying some of the questions, particularly for the second and third grade students. In revision, two sets of questions about the "In The News" segments were devised to accommodate grade levels. Because recall questions were needed for the viewer groups and because the older groups were questioned about media use and knowledge of current events, four questionnaires were devised: young viewer, young non-viewer, older viewer, and older non-viewer. Questions were identical between the age groups' questionnaires except for different questions concerning the liking of "In The News." The liking questions were identical between group categories (Appendices B, C, D and E).

The four questionnaires were pretested and found to be acceptable.

Procedure During Experiment

The experiment was conducted March 5, 1975, in Rooms 104 and 110 of the Engineering Center, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas.

Participants arrived at the campus at 1:30 p.m. by bus. Prior to arriving at the campus, students had been divided into their randomly assigned groups. The control group was taken to Room 104. The experimental group was taken to Room 110.

The two rooms are furnished similarly. Room 110 has two television sets in it; Room 104 does not. In both rooms, tables and chairs had been pushed to the walls. Children sat on the carpeted floor in both rooms during the experiment.

Discipline was handled by the school teachers that accompanied the students. In each room, a graduate student read the instructions to the participants. Instructions were identical (Appendices F and G). Assistants and teachers were available to help students with reading; however, these people had been instructed not to tell a student the meaning of any word.

The control group spent approximately 25 minutes answering questionnaires. This concluded their role in the experiment.

The experimental group spent approximately 47 minutes viewing the stimulus material. The students were instructed to pay attention to the material, but they were allowed to talk and sit as they wished (Appendix G). This casual

atmosphere attempted to imitate home behavior. After viewing the stimulus material, students spent approximately 25 minutes answering questionnaires.

CHAPTER III

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Description of Sample Groups

The results of the experiment were tabulated for 16 young viewers (experimental group), 14 young non-viewers (control group), 23 older viewers (experimental group), and 24 older non-viewers (control group).

A test of randomness, the Chi Square Test of Association, determined that none of the groups were skewed in distribution in relation to age, sex, or school level.

Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4 show the age distribution and school level distribution for the control and experimental groups. The young experimental group had 50 per cent boys and 50 per cent girls. The young control group had 42.9 per cent boys and 57.1 per cent girls. In the older experimental group there were 56.5 per cent boys and 43.5 per cent girls. Boys and girls each made up 50 per cent of the older control group.

Description of Results

Liking for Television Commercials

Participants in both the experimental and control groups were asked questions concerning television commercials in general. In response to a question concerning behavior

TABLE 1

AGE DISTRIBUTION FOR CONTROL AND EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS FOR YOUNG PARTICIPANTS

Age	Groups Control	Experimental
7	21%	44%
8	36	44
9	21	6
No response	21	6

X^2 = .92 N.S.

TABLE 2

AGE DISTRIBUTION FOR CONTROL AND EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS FOR OLDER PARTICIPANTS

Age	Groups Control	Experimental
8	4%	0%
9	25	13
10	29	35
11	21	35
12	21	17

X^2 = 2.85 N.S.

TABLE 3

SCHOOL LEVEL DISTRIBUTION FOR CONTROL AND EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS FOR YOUNG SUBJECTS

School Level	Groups Control	Experimental
2	57%	56%
3	43	44

X^2 = .10 N.S.

TABLE 4

SCHOOL LEVEL DISTRIBUTION FOR CONTROL AND EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS FOR OLDER SUBJECTS

School Level	Groups	
	Control	Experimental
4	38%	35%
5	29	30
6	33	35

$X^2 = .03$ N.S.

during commercials, most children (66.7% young; 44.7% older) said they watched commercials. However, in stating how much they believe what the commercials say, only 23.3 per cent of young subjects and 2.2 per cent of older subjects said they believe the commercials "a lot." "Some" belief in commercials was expressed by 53.3 per cent of young children and 65.2 per cent of older children. "Not much" belief in commercials was expressed by 32.6 per cent of older participants and by 23.3 per cent of young participants.

The control group was questioned about their liking of commercials with 23.1 per cent of young subjects saying they liked commercials "a lot." "Some" liking was expressed by 30.8 per cent of young children and 58.3 per cent of older children. "Not much" liking was expressed by 46.2 per cent of young children and 41.7 per cent of older children.

Viewers showed that children can recall commercials just viewed when aided by the manufacturer's name and the product name. Children were asked to select the commercials they had just seen from a list of products and manufacturers' names. Three commercials were correctly selected by 78 per cent of the older children and by 50 per cent of the younger children. Two commercials were identified by 13 per cent of the older subjects and by 31 per cent of the younger subjects.

Mass Media Use and Exposure to Television News Programs

The older participants were questioned as to their use of the media. Only 8.5 per cent said they read a newspaper "a lot." "Some" reading was expressed by 48.9 per cent, and "not much," by 42.6 per cent. "Not much" magazine reading was done by 53.2 per cent; "some," by 29.8 per cent. Radio listening was done "a lot" by 61.7 per cent of the children questioned, and "some," by 27.7 per cent. Television was viewed "a lot" by 80.9 per cent of the children questioned.

All children were asked how much they viewed national news programs. "Some" national news was viewed by 27.6 per cent young children and by 40.4 per cent older children. "Not much" was viewed by 48.3 per cent young children and by 46.8 per cent older children.

Children were asked which part of local news programs was their favorites. Sports was preferred by 46.7 per cent of young children and by 59.6 per cent of older children. Weather was preferred by 25.5 per cent of older children and by 40 per cent of younger children. Only 13.3 per cent young and 14.9 per cent older children preferred news. However, when asked how much the news portion of local news programs was viewed, 46.7 per cent young and 15.2 per cent older children said they view the news "a lot." "Some" news was watched by 36.7 per cent young and 47.8 per cent older children. "Not much" news was viewed by 16.7 per cent young children and 37 per cent older children.

In response to a question asking for the main source of news of current events, 74.5 per cent older children and 50 per cent younger children rated television as the main source. Newspapers were rated by the second greatest number of children (10.6% older; 16.7% younger). Parents were rated as the main source of news by 10 per cent of the young children and by 8.5 per cent of the older children. School was ranked as the main source of news by 13.3 per cent of the young children. Radio was rated as the main news source by 6.7 per cent of the young and 2.1 per cent of the older children. Friends were the main source of news for 3.3 per cent of young children and 4.3 per cent of older children. Magazines were not given as the main source of news by any children.

Believability of news sources was questioned also. Television was believed for its news of current events by 51.7 per cent young and 53.2 per cent older children. The news found in newspapers was believed most by 21.3 per cent older and 31 per cent younger children. Parents as a news source were believed by 23.4 per cent older and 3.4 per cent younger children. School was the most believed news source by 10.3 per cent young children. Radio was believed most by 3.4 per cent young and 2.1 per cent older children. Magazines and friends were not believed as news sources.

Non-viewers were asked if they had ever seen the CBS news program, "In The News." Only 8.3 per cent of older and 35.7 per cent of young non-viewers had not seen "In The News." A question concerning the format of "In The News" was asked to test the accuracy of the preceding question. Only 7.7 per cent of young non-viewers did not know what type program "In The News" is.

Viewers were asked how well they liked "In The News." "Some" liking was expressed by 43.8 per cent of young and 60.9 per cent of older viewers. "In The News" was liked "a lot" by 43.8 per cent younger and 26.1 per cent older viewers. "Not much" liking was expressed by 12.5 per cent younger and 13 per cent older children.

In an attempt to further determine liking of "In The News," participants were asked if they would like to see

more "In The News" programs at home. "A lot" more programs were desired by 50 per cent young viewers and 30.4 per cent older viewers. "Some" additional programs were desired by 31.3 per cent young and 65.2 per cent older viewers. "Not much" additional programming of "In The News" was preferred by 18.8 per cent young and 4.3 per cent older viewers.

In an attempt to determine if children recognize "In The News" as a program, viewers were asked the number of programs they had just seen. Two cartoons and two "In The News" segments were broadcast for a total of four programs. Only 7.7 per cent of young viewers and 21.7 per cent of older viewers gave the correct answer.

Liking for News Programs and "In The News" Scores

An association was found to exist between those second and third grade level participants whose favorite part of local news programs was news and "In The News" scores ($X^2 = 18.85$, $P<.01$). Those second and third grade students whose favorite part of local news programs was news scored higher on the "In The News" test than others of the same grade levels (Table 5).

Sex, Program Reception and Behavior During Commercials

Sex and program reception were significantly related ($X^2 = 10.69$, $P<.004$). Older viewer girls liked "In The News" better than older viewer boys (Table 6).

TABLE 5

FAVORITE PART OF LOCAL NEWS AND "IN THE NEWS" SCORES OF YOUNG SUBJECTS

Favorite Part News	"In The News" Score 0	1	2	3	4
News	25%	25%	0%	0%	50%
Weather	0	8.3	58.3	33.3	0
Sports	0	7.1	57.1	28.6	7.1

$X^2 = 18.85$ $P < .01$.

TABLE 6

SEX OF SUBJECTS AND LIKING OF "IN THE NEWS" FOR OLDER VIEWERS

Sex of Subject	Liking of "In The News" Not Much	Some	A lot
Male	15.4%	84.6%	0
Female	10	30	60

$X^2 = 10.69$ $P < .004$.

Sex also was related to behavior during commercials. Girls talked during commercials, and boys did not. Boys ate more than girls did during commercials ($X^2 = 8.49$, $P < .03$). Sex was not associated with switching and watching behavior (Table 7).

Age and News Program Preference

Age and favorite part of local news programs were significantly related ($X^2 = 17.00$, $P < .03$). Sports as the favorite part of local news programs increased with age (Table 8).

TABLE 7

SEX OF SUBJECTS AND BEHAVIOR DURING COMMERCIALS FOR OLDER PARTICIPANTS

Sex of Participant	Behavior During Commercials			
	Talk	Watch	Switch	Eat
Male	4%	44%	20%	32%
Female	31.8	45.5	13.6	9.1

$X^2 = 8.49$ $P<.03$

TABLE 8

AGE AND FAVORITE PART OF LOCAL NEWS PROGRAMS FOR OLDER SUBJECTS

Age of Subject	Parts of Local News Programs		
	News	Weather	Sports
8	100%	0%	0%
9	11.1	55.6	33.3
10	6.7	26.7	66.7
11	30.8	15.4	53.8
12	0	11.1	88.9

$X^2 = 17.00$ $P<.03$

School Level and Current Events Knowledge

School level and current events knowledge were significantly related ($X^2 = 21.16$, $P<.02$). Fourth grade students did significantly worse than fifth and sixth grade students on a test of knowledge of current events (Table 9).

TABLE 9

SCHOOL LEVEL AND CURRENT EVENTS KNOWLEDGE FOR OLDER SUBJECTS

School Level	Score on Current Events Test 1	2	3	4	5	6
4th	0%	17.6%	23.5%	29.4%	23.5%	5.9%
5th	7.1	0	0	28.6	42.9	21.4
6th	0	0	0	18.8	37.5	43.8

$X^2 = 21.16$ $P<.02$

Test of Hypotheses

Exposure to "In The News" and Learning

Analysis of Variance tests were performed to determine if learning resulted from viewing "In The News," a test of the first hypothesis. Viewers' scores on questions concerning material presented in the two "In The News" segments were compared with non-viewers' scores on the same questions. Second and third grade level participants in the viewing and non-viewing groups were compared because these two levels had identical questions but their questions were different from the older grade-level participants' questions.

Results indicate that young viewers had a mean score of 1.5 compared to a 2.07 mean score for young non-viewers. This difference was not significant ($F = 1.67$) (Tables 10 and 11).

Old viewers' mean score was 4.34 on the test while older non-viewers' mean score was 2.45, a difference which is significant ($F = 31.88$, $P<.01$) (Table 12).

TABLE 10

NON-VIEWER AND VIEWER "IN THE NEWS" MEAN RETENTION SCORES FOR YOUNG AND OLDER PARTICIPANTS

Participants	Groups: Non-Viewers	Groups: Viewers
Young	2.07	1.5
Older	2.45	4.34

TABLE 11

F-TABLE: NON-VIEWER AND VIEWER "IN THE NEWS" RETENTION SCORES FOR YOUNG PARTICIPANTS

Source	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Squares	F	P
Total	24.3	29	.83		
Between	1.37	1	1.37		
Within	22.92	28	.81	1.67	N.S.

TABLE 12

F-TABLE: NON-VIEWER AND VIEWER "IN THE NEWS" RETENTION SCORES FOR OLDER PARTICIPANTS

Source	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Squares	F	P
Total	101.1	46	2.19		
Between	41.93	1	41.93		
Within	59.17	45	1.31	31.88	.01

These results indicate that "In The News" effectively taught older viewers about the events reported, but not the young viewers.

Learning of "Hard" and "Soft" News

The second hypothesis, that children learn more from "hard" news, was tested in a similar manner. Viewers' scores on "hard" and "soft" news questions were compared to determine if more knowledge was acquired from one type of news chan from the other. Again, young and older participants' scores were compared separately because of the differences in questions according to school level.

Results showed a mean score of .81 for the young viewers' "hard" news questions. "Soft" news mean score for young viewers was 1.68. This difference was not significant (F = 4.79)(Tables 13 and 14).

TABLE 13

"SOFT" AND "HARD" NEWS MEAN RETENTION SCORES FOR YOUNG AND OLDER VIEWERS

News	Viewer Groups Older	Young
"Soft"	1.95	1.68
"Hard"	2.43	.81

Older viewers' "hard" news mean score was 2.43. The mean score on "soft" news questions for older viewers was 1.95. This difference was significant (F = 4.25, P<.05) (Table 15).

TABLE 14

F-TABLE: "SOFT" AND "HARD" NEWS RETENTION SCORES FOR YOUNG VIEWERS

Source	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Squares	F	P
Total	24	31	.77		
Between	6.12	1	6.12		
Within	17.87	30	1.27	4.79	N.S.

TABLE 15

F-TABLE: "SOFT" AND "HARD" NEWS RETENTION SCORES FOR OLDER VIEWERS

Source	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Squares	F	P
Total	29.23	44	.664		
Between	2.63	1	2.63		
Within	26.60	43	.618	4.25	.05

These results indicate that the "hard" news segment of "In The News" taught more than the "soft" news segment for older viewers but not for the younger viewers.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

Objectives of the experiment were to determine if children learn from viewing "In The News" and to determine if "hard" news does result in more learning, as previous research suggests.

In the experiment, the 77 participants were randomly divided into a control and experiment group. The control group took a test, and the experimental group took a similar test after viewing two cartoons and two "In The News" segments. Scores on the two groups' tests were compared and the following significant results were obtained.

Results from this experiment indicate that older children learn from watching "In The News," and that these older children learn significantly more from the "hard" news segments than from "soft" news segments.

Another result of the study is that those young children whose favorite parts of local news programs are news scored highest on the "In The News" test.

For older participants, sex is a factor in the reception of "In The News" segments. Girls liked "In The News" significantly more than boys liked the program.

Sex also is related to older participants' behaviors during commercials. Girls talk during commercials, and most boys do not. Boys eat during commercials, and most girls do not.

Older children's ages are related to their preferences for portions of local news programs. Sports, as the favorite part of local news programs, increases with age.

Current events knowledge and school level of participants are related. Fourth grade students scored significantly worse than fifth and sixth grade students on a current events test.

Conclusions from Results

The previously discussed evidence indicates that "In The News" is an effective educational method for fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students. The results also indicate that fourth, fifth, and sixth grade children learn more from "hard" news than "soft" news segments of "In The News." These results seem to indicate that "In The News" does not communicate information equally to all ages in the target audience. The young children, grades two and three, do not learn as much from "In The News" as do the older grade-level members of the target audience. In considering "In The News" as a purely educational program, the viewers as students would be best served by news segments of a "hard"

news nature. The findings show that "In The News" can teach a segment of its target audience, and that "In The News" can teach this same segment of the target audience more about "hard" news subjects than "soft" news subjects.

Liking of news appears to be a factor in how much a young child learns from "In The News." Those second and third grade level children whose favorite parts of local news programs were news scored highest on the "In The News" test. This suggests that perhaps children who like news pay more attention to news programs and thus learn from the news program. Because "In The News" is a news segment, it would very likely capture the interest of young children who like to watch news. This shows again that "In The News" communicates to certain segments of the target audience, in this instance, to those young viewers who like news.

Other results again show that "In The News" is not received equally by all segments of the target audience. Older girls were more receptive to "In The News" than were older boys. Previous research (cited Chapter I) found that boys watch more news programs than girls. "In The News" has succeeded in appealing to a segment of the audience that does not usually like or ultimately watch news programs.

In summary, there are several conclusions which can be reached concerning "In The News." "In The News" communicates to certain segments of the target audience instead

of to the entire audience. "In The News" is liked most by fourth, fifth, and sixth grade girls. "In The News" teaches fourth, fifth, and sixth grade children knowledge of current events. The program communicates more knowledge of "hard" news subjects. These facts suggest that some changes in the program should be made. The program should be changed to appeal to boys and younger children. Or, perhaps a program aimed at younger children should be developed. A program aimed at younger children could possibly increase the amount of knowledge of current events communicated to younger children. Perhaps mostly "hard" news segments should be shown in "In The News" programs because children can learn most from this type of news. Perhaps if these changes were made, the program would then appeal to all segments of the target audience. The program also should reach the zenith of its educational capacity.

Recommendations for Further Study

Further studies similar to this experiment should be done before any changes are made in the format of "In The News." Children from other socioeconomic backgrounds should be studied. Minority children should be studied to determine if race affects recall, recognition, and learning from "In The News." Children in many different geographic locations should be tested similarly to determine if these results are valid only for Lubbock, Texas.

Research should try to determine why young children do not learn from "In The News." The value of "In The News" as a learning tool would be increased if all ages within the target audience could learn from the program.

Research to discover why "hard" news subjects communicate more knowledge should be done. If an answer was found for this question, perhaps "In The News" could effectively communicate knowledge of both "hard" and "soft" news subjects.

Another area that could be studied is retention of knowledge gained from "In The News." In this experiment, recall was immediate. How much knowledge would have been retained in a week?

"In The News" should be studied further to determine why boys do not like the program as much as girls do. Perhaps liking of the program would vary with content of the segments. One way to test this variable would be to show male-oriented, female-oriented, and neutral segments and then determine which segments were liked best by each sex. The scope of "In The News" would be increased if the program were well-liked by both boys and girls.

Different time length formats could be tested. Would children learn more from a three-minute or five-minute segment than from the present one and one-half minute segment?

Would liking of the program increase or decrease with an increased time format?

Program presentation could be studied. At present, the segments are entirely graphic with a male announcer's voice narrating the story. Would a female announcer be more effective than a male in communicating information? Would seeing the announcer affect the communicativeness of the program?

Program placement in the Saturday and Sunday morning schedules also could be studied. Would children watch and perhaps learn more if the segments were at a quarter after the hour and a quarter until the hour instead of at the present on the half-hour and on the hour scheduling? How would the program be received if it were shown at night or on weekdays at time children are watching TV?

Limitations of Study

This experiment has the same strengths and weaknesses of every other experiment. A laboratory experiment allows for rigid control of variables. Therefore, results obtained in a laboratory experiment are highly valid. However, the results, no matter how accurate, cannot be readily applied to external situations. The results, obtained in an artificial setting, are accurate only for the population studied (Kerlinger, 1973).

A limitation to this study is the sample itself. The students who participated in the experiment came from an

open concept private school. Because of this, the participants may have been more mentally advanced than the average student at each grade level tested. However, this population was used because the public school system would not allow its students to participate.

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APPENDIX A: LETTERS TO PARENTS

Texas Tech University

P.O. Box 4080 Lubbock, Texas 79409 Phone (806) 742-4250 or 742-4256

Department of Mass Communications
Journalism
Advertising
Telecommunications

February 17, 1975

Dear Parents:

Ann Ward, a Master of Arts candidate in the department of Mass Communications, Texas Tech University, is doing a research study in the area of children's television programming.

The study deals with a news program designed for children ages seven to 13. Goals of the study are: (1) to determine how well the news program is liked; (2) to ascertain if children can distinguish the news program from commercials and other programs; (3) to determine how much information is absorbed; (4) to discover children's sources for current event news; and (5) to observe children's reactions to commercial advertising.

The study will be conducted on the Texas Tech University campus Wednesday, March 5 at 1:30 p.m. Children will be transported from the St. Christopher campus to the University campus by city buses. Total participation time will be approximately one and one-half hours.

Basically children will view the news program in addition to programs appropriate to typical Saturday morning television (cartoons). A written questionnaire testing recall and knowledge will then be administered.

If you will allow your child to participate in the study, please complete the permission slip and return it to the child's homebase teacher by February 28, 1975. Please do not discuss the study with your child.

Results of this study will be made available to St. Christopher's School. Your cooperation in assisting with this timely study will be greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions about the project, please call me at 742-4256.

Sincerely,

Alexis S. Tan

Alexis Tan
Associate Professor

st. christopher's school

2807 42nd STREET • 799-1161 • LUBBOCK, TEXAS 79413

February 17, 1975

Dear Parents:

We have received a request from Dr. Alexis Tan and Ann Ward, Department of Mass Communications, Texas Tech University, to allow our students to participate in a research study. Enclosed is a description of this study.

Data of this nature eventually influences children's television programming. It seems appropriate that we participate in this study.

I do hope that you will return the attached permission slip. Please return the slip to your child's home base teacher by February 28, 1975.

Sincerely,
Betty T. Snyder
Director

ST. CHRISTOPHER'S SCHOOL
2807 42nd Street
Lubbock, Texas

February 17, 1975

I GIVE MY PERMISSION FOR MY CHILD TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT CONDUCTED BY DR. ALEXIS TAN AND ANN WARD, DEPARTMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATIONS, TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY. I AM AWARE THAT MY CHILD WILL TRAVEL TO THE TECH CAMPUS DURING SCHOOL HOURS.

CHILD'S NAME: _____

_____
Parent's Signature

_____
Date

APPENDIX B: YOUNGER NON-VIEWER QUESTIONNAIRE

Check (✓) only one answer to each of the following questions. If you have a question, raise your hand and someone will come to help you. Do not leave your seat. Do not talk. When you finish, you may draw on the back of your paper.

1. Have you seen a TV program called "In The News"?
   ____Yes ____No
2. Which of the following happens on "In The News"?
   ____Singing ____Dancing ____Talking
3. Do you like the commercials shown in the programs you watch? ____A lot ____Some ____Not much
4. What do you do when the commercials are on TV?
   ____Talk to parents or brother/sister ____Watch the commercials ____Switch channels ____Go get something to eat
5. Do you believe what the commercials say?
   ____A lot ____Some ____Not much
6. Do you watch news programs done by Walter Cronkite, John Chancellor, or Harry Reasoner?
   ____A lot ____Some ____Not much
7. Local news programs have 3 parts. First comes the news, then the weather, and last the sports. Which is your favorite part? ____News ____Weather ____Sports

8. How much do you watch the news part of local news programs? ____A lot ____Some ____Not much

9. Where do you get most of your news of what is happening in the world? ____School ____Parents ____Television ____Newspapers ____Radio ____Magazines ____Friends

10. Which one do you believe most when they tell you what is happening in the world? ____School ____Parents ____Television ____Newspapers ____Radio ____Magazines ____Friends

11. Who is the Prime Minister of Great Britain? ____Harold Wilson ____Winston Churchill ____Lord Snowden

12. The meaning of the word majority is: ____almost all ____more than half ____all

13. Lady ballet dancers wear a skirt called a: ____mini ____maumau ____tutu

14. To dance well, dancers must do what every day? ____Eat lots of meat ____Take a nap ____Practice dancing

15. How old are you?_____

16. Are you a boy or a girl? ____Boy ____Girl

17. What is your level in school?_____

18. What kind of work does your father do?_____

APPENDIX C: OLDER NON-VIEWER QUESTIONNAIRE

Check (✓) only one answer to each of the following questions. If you have a question, raise your hand and someone will come to help you. Do not leave your seat. Do not talk. When you finish, you may draw on the back of your paper.

Have you ever seen a TV program called "In The News?"

____Yes ____No

2. Which of the following best describes "In The News?"

____comedy ____musical ____informative ____movie

3. Do you like the commercials shown in the programs you watch? ____A lot ____Some ____Not much

4. What do you do when the commercials come on TV?

____Talk to parents or brother/sister ____Watch the commercials ____Switch channels ____Go get something to eat

5. Do you believe what the commercials say?

____A lot ____Some ____Not much

6. Do you watch news programs starring Walter Cronkite, John Chancellor, or Harry Reasoner?

____A lot ____Some ____Not much

7. Local news programs have 3 parts. First comes the news, then the weather, and last the sports. Which is your favorite part? ____News ____Weather ____Sports

8. How often do you watch the news part of local news programs? ____A lot ____Some ____Not much

9. Where do you get most of your news of what is going on in the world? ____School ____Parents ____Television ____Newspapers ____Radio ____Magazines ____Friends

10. Which one do you believe most when they give you news of what is going on in the world? ____School ____Parents ____Television ____Newspapers ____Radio ____Magazines ____Friends

11. How much do you read a newspaper (like the Lubbock Avalanche-Journal)? ____A lot ____Some ____Not much

12. How much do you read a news magazine or any magazine that gives you news? ____A lot ____Some ____Not much

13. How much do you listen to the radio?
____A lot ____Some ____Not much

14. How much do you watch television?
____A lot ____Some ____Not much

15. Who is the President of the United States?
____Lyndon Johnson ____Gerald Ford ____Richard Nixon ____Robert Kennedy

16. Who is the mayor of Lubbock? ____Roy Bass ____"Mo" Turner ____Carolyn Jordan ____Bryce Campbell

17. Who is Nelson Rockefeller? ____A news reporter on TV ____A rock'n roll singer ____Vice President of the United States

18. The car makers in the United States have done something to sell more cars. Which one of the following have the car makers done? ____Offer rebates ____Give longer guarantees ____Give free gasoline

19. There was recently a shortage of a food. Which of the following foods was in short supply? ____Eggs ____Sugar ____Peanut Butter ____Ham

20. A street in Lubbock will be made longer. This will happen because city rulers and Texas Tech University rulers have finally agreed. Which one of these streets will be made longer? ____Indiana ____Quaker ____University ____Boston

21. Who is the Prime Minister of Great Britain? ____Harold Wilson ____Winston Churchill ____Willie Brandt

22. Compared with food prices in the United States, food prices in Great Britain are which one of the following? ____Lower ____About the same ____Higher

23. Great Britain is doing something to its industries to help the economy. Which one of the following is Great Britain doing? ____Rationalization ____Nationalization ____Mechanization

24. The Prime Minister of Great Britain is a member of which political party? ____Democratic ____Republican ____Labor ____Conservative

25. Lady ballet dancers wear a skirt called a:

____tutu ____maumau ____dirndl

26. Why are members of the Los Angeles Ballet Company dancing in the street? ____To entertain people ____To get money for their company ____To advertise their shows

27. How old are you?_____

28. Are you a boy or a girl? ____Boy ____Girl

29. What is your level in school?_____

30. What kind of work does your father do?_____

APPENDIX D: YOUNGER VIEWER QUESTIONNAIRE

Check (✓) only one answer to each of the following questions. If you have a question, raise your hand and someone will come to help you. Do not leave your seat. Do not talk. When you finish, you may draw on the back of your paper.

1. How many different commercials did you just see?_____
2. How many different programs did you just see?_____
3. Which of these commercials did you just see? Check (✓) as many as you just saw.

   ____Remco Toys (Mini Tru-Smoke Diesel Truck/Popcorn Popper)

   ____Burger King (Hamburger)

   ____Baskin-Robbins (Ice cream)

   ____Quaker (Captain Crunch Cereal)

   ____Kellogg's (Sugar Frosted Flakes Cereal)
4. Did you like the "In The News" programs you just saw?

   ____A lot ____Some ____Not much
5. Would you like to see more "In The News" programs on TV in your home? ____A lot ____Some ____Not at all
6. Who is the Prime Minister of Great Britain?

   ____Harold Wilson ____Winston Churchill

   ____Lord Snowden
7. The meaning of the word majority is: ____almost all

   ____more than half ____all

8. Lady ballet dancers wear a skirt called a:

____Mini ____Maumau ____Tutu

9. To dance well, dancers must do what every day?

____Eat lots of meat ____Take a nap ____Practice dancing

10. What do you do at home when the commercials are on TV?

____Talk to parents or brother/sister ____Watch the commercials ____Switch channels ____Go get something to eat

11. Do you believe what the commercials on TV say?

____A lot ____Some ____Not much

12. At home, do you watch news programs done by Walter Cronkite, John Chancellor, or Harry Reasoner?

____A lot ____Some ____Not much

13. Local news programs have 3 parts. First comes the news, then the weather, and last the sports. Which one is your favorite part? ____News ____Weather ____Sports

14. How much do you watch the news part of local news programs? ____A lot ____Some ____Not much

15. Where do you get most of your news of what is happening in the world? ____School ____Parents ____Television ____Newspapers ____Radio ____Magazines ____Friends

16. Which one do you believe most when they tell you what is happening in the world? ____School ____Parents ____Television ____Newspapers ____Radio ____Magazines ____Friends

17. How old are you?_____

18. Are you a boy or a girl? ____Boy ____Girl

19. What is your level in school?_____

20. What kind of work does your father do?_____.

APPENDIX E: OLDER VIEWER QUESTIONNAIRE

Check (✓) only one answer to each of the following questions. If you have a question, raise your hand and someone will come help you. Do not leave your seat. Do no talk. When you finish, you may draw on the back of your paper.

1. How many commercials did you just see?_____
2. How many programs did you just see?_____
3. Which of these commercials did you just see? Check (✓) as many as you just saw.

   ____Remco Toys (Mini Tru-Smoke Diesel Truck/Popocorn Popper)

   ____Baskin-Robbins (Ice cream)

   ____Quaker (Captain Crunch Cereal)

   ____Burger King (Hamburger)

   ____Jet Power (Car)

   ____Post (Corn Flakes Cereal)
4. Did you like the "In The News" programs you just saw?

   ____A lot ____Some ____Not much
5. Would you like to see other "In The News" programs on TV in your home? ____A lot ____Some ____Not at all
6. Who is the Prime Minister of Great Britain?

   ____Harold Wilson ____Winston Churchill

   ____Willie Brandt

7. Compared with food prices in the United States, food prices in Great Britain are which one of the following?
____Lower ____About the same ____Higher

8. The Prime Minister of Great Britain is a member of which political party? ____Democratic ____Republican
____Labor ____Conservative

9. Great Britain is doing something to its industries to help the economy. Which one of the following is Great Britain doing? ____Rationalization
____Nationalization ____Mechanization

10. Lady Ballet dancers wear a skirt called a:
____tutu ____maumau ____dirndl

11. Why are members of the Los Angeles Ballet Company dancing in the street? ____To entertain people ____To get money for their company ____To advertise for their shows

12. What do you do at home when the commercials come on TV?
____Talk to parents or brother/sister ____Watch the commercials ____Switch channels ____Go get something to eat

13. Do you believe what the commercials say?
____A lot ____Some ____Not much

14. Do you watch news programs starring Walter Cronkite, John Chancellor, or Harry Reasoner?
____A lot ____Some ____Not much

15. Local news programs have 3 parts. First comes the news, then the weather, and last the sports. Which one is your favorite part? ____News ____Weather ____Sports

16. How much do you watch the news part of local news programs? ____A lot ____Some ____Not much

17. Where do you get most of your news of what is going on in the world? ____School ____Parents ____Television ____Newspapers ____Radio ____Magazines ____Friends

18. Which one do you believe most when they give you news of what is going on in the world? ____School ____Parents ____Television ____Newspapers ____Radio ____Magazines ____Friends

19. How much do you read a newspaper (like the Lubbock Avalanche-Journal)? ____A lot ____Some ____Not much

20. How much do you read a news magazine or any magazine that gives you news? ____A lot ____Some ____Not much

21. How much do you listen to the radio?
____A lot ____Some ____Not much

22. How much do you watch television?
____A lot ____Some ____Not much

23. Who is the President of the United States? ____Lyndon Johnson ____Gerald Ford ____Richard Nixon ____Robert Kennedy

24. Who is the mayor of Lubbock? ____Roy Bass ____"Mo" Turner ____Carolyn Jordan ____Bryce Campbell

25. Who is Nelson Rockefeller? ____A news reporter on TV ____A rock'n roll singer ____Vice President of the United States

26. The car makers in the United States have done something to sell more cars. Which of the following have the car makers done? ____Offer rebates ____Give longer guarantees ____Give free gasoline

27. There was recently a shortage of a food. Which one of the following foods was in short supply? ____Eggs ____Sugar ____Peanut Butter ____Ham

28. Some street in Lubbock will be made longer. This will happen because city rulers and Texas Tech University rulers have finally agreed. Which one of these streets will be made longer? ____Indiana ____Quaker ____University ____Boston

29. How old are you?_____

30. Are you a boy or a girl? ____Boy ____Girl

31. What is your level in school?_____

32. What kind of work does your father do?_____

APPENDIX F: INSTRUCTIONS FOR NON-VIEWERS

Hello, my name is Margaret Kistler. This is Pat Bruno. I am very glad that you could all come today to help me with this project.

In just a few minutes, we will give you some questions to answer. It is very important that you answer these questions truthfully. We want your own individual answers, so do not talk to your neighbors. Your answers will be put in a computer and the results will be sent to Washington, D.C. A copy of the results will go to St. Christopher's School so that each of you will know the results of this project.

When you get your questions, do not put your name on the paper. Do not talk; answer all the questions by yourself. Put a check mark beside only one answer to each question. Do not get up. If you need help, raise your hand and someone will come to help you. When you finish, you may draw on the back of your paper.

Does anyone have any questions?

When you get your questions, do not put your name on the paper. Do not talk; answer all the questions by yourself. Put a check mark beside only one answer to each question. Do not get up. If you need help, raise your hand and someone will come to help you. When you finish, you may draw on the back of your paper.

As soon as you get the questions, you may begin.

(You may tell a child what a word is; do not tell him what the word means.)

APPENDIX G: INSTRUCTIONS FOR VIEWERS

Hello, my name is Ann Ward. This is Carolyn Guinn and Bobby Waller. I'm very glad that you could all come today to help me with this project. I have something that I want you to see. It is very important that you pay attention to what you will see. Watch one of the two TV's. When the TV is turned off, I will give you more instructions.

In just a few minutes, we will give you some questions to answer. It is very important that you answer these questions truthfully. We want your own individual answers, so do not talk to your neighbors. Your answers will be put in a computer and the results will be sent to Washington, D.C. A copy of the results will go to St. Christopher's School so that each of you will know the results of this project.

When you get your questions, do not put your name on the paper. Do not talk; answer all the questions by yourself. Put a check mark beside only one answer to each question, except #3. Do not get up. If you need help, raise your hand and someone will come to help you. When you finish, you may draw on the back of your paper.

Does anyone have a question?

When you get your questions, do not put your name on the paper. Do not talk; answer all the questions by yourself. Put a check mark beside only one answer to each

question, except #3. Do not get up. If you need help, raise your hand and someone will come to help you. When you finish, you may draw on the back of your paper.

As soon as you get the questions, you may begin.

(You may tell a child what a word is; do not tell him what the word means.)